

## THE INVENTOR AS POET IMPROMPTU

On November 21, 1955, in East Orange, New Jersey, at the Sixth Thomas Alva Edison Foundation Institute, Charles F. Kettering, President of the Foundation, gave an address on "An Inventor Looks at Education." As a strayed humanist, in a gathering of scientists and technologists, I probably missed the full meaning of much of what was said; but, to make up for that, I think I heard some things others may have missed: the cadence, the imagery, the imaginative wit of whole passages in "Boss Kett's" impromptu talk. Take, for example, the following:

As I said, you can have all the theories about what happens in the leaf of that plant that you want to have, and it won't affect the plant one bit. It has been going along that way, and the fellow says it oughtn't to work that way, but it does . . .

We looked at the birds until we learned how to fly, but we never put feathers on the airplanes. With all the skill of all the aeronautical engineers in the world, we couldn't make a feather today, and all of our science cannot make a leaf. We can do the same thing that happens in the leaf, but it won't look like a leaf. That's all I'm talking about.

Somebody said, "What do you think is going to happen to technology in the future?" It is going to keep right on going, because when you know so little about what goes on in the world, somebody is going to find out something tomorrow. If I were writing a book today, the title would be, "Yes, but Tomorrow is Another Day." You want to close it up today, but you can't close it up. We know too little to close it up.

M.H.G.

## The Linguist as Psychiatrist

I am profoundly suspicious of any theory of education which begins, ends with, or includes the notion that our job as teachers is to butter up the square pegs in our classrooms in order that they may slip with minimum of friction into the round holes which ultimately await them. Information, I thought in my innocence, was what set us apart from the downy heads before us. We had it and they lacked it. Our job was to narrow the gap, not to practice amateur psychiatry or social lubrication upon them.

For this reason I turned with relief to my class in the history of the English language. After the stubborn hours of forcing the brandy of literature down reluctant throats, this was cool water out of a wooden bowl. This was emotionless Science with demonstrable answers to limited questions.

### A Revelation

So I thought. When I prepared my final examination for the course last semester I laid myself open, however, for revelation. I announced that each student was to write and bring with him to the examination a short paper on the general topic: "A sane and enlightened attitude for the cultivated native speaker of English to

take toward problems of usage." One of my students submitted an essay so forthright and honest that I cannot improve upon his words. Here, in part and unretouched, is what he said:

"As a high school student I was proud that my speech would not be labelled as 'typical nigger talk'; it was at this time that I was learning 'a standard and accepted speech' — as one of my teachers put it. During that time there were few things more embarrassing for me than to have my friends hear my mother speak. This feeling has left me — partly because of my realization that I was putting my own pride ahead of my love and respect for Mother, and partly because of a new attitude towards language since taking English 520.

"Before this change of attitude I would almost cringe when my friends came to my home and were exposed to Mother's speech. 'Ask yoah frens in en set um down on da settee. Ef you need chairs I'll tote some in. I hopes dat man-ish rascal (a bad boy, juvenile delinquent) en womanless heifer (a bad girl) ain't in da crowd.'

"I soon realized that I couldn't be snobbish towards Mother and

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## The Ph.D. in English at Rochester

A new Ph.D. program must certainly justify itself in some special way. We hear on all sides that graduate work in English is now developing more candidates than the profession can absorb. If what is already too extensive should be further enlarged, the burden of proof is on the new plan.

It must not lose the essentials of traditional study; it must absorb in turn the recent changes inspired by the critical movement; it must offer some fresh and original approach, or at least show that it will do what other systems claim to do and fail in, or what is commonly said to be what ought to be done but isn't; it must serve more clearly the commonly stated ideal of the teacher-scholar and so give effect to a universal aspiration; it must, in short, answer a standard objection to graduate study that it does not train the person who is now called for by our profession.

In order to perform all this, one does not have to think up any elaborate scheme or system of complicated materials embodying some wild theory. It is necessary only to adapt the common forms of study to the needs of the time, remaining flexible enough to absorb the best current ideas. A few elementary principles will serve for guidance.

### Postpone Specialization

First, intense specialization ought to be postponed. One of the oldest objections to standard graduate study in English is that it is not liberal, general, or humane enough. It is said to be austere, barren and analytical far beyond the interest of students just out of college. In its extreme forms, older graduate study is said to assume too much, going too far in its own direction. It takes for granted a kind of education which even the best students do not obtain nowadays as undergraduates. The general emphasis has long been away from literary study, and most young persons who go in for English graduate work, no matter how good they are, find it necessary at that late date to learn a great many things that used to be (or used to be thought of as) part of the general equipment of a bachelor of arts.

During the first two years of graduate work, then, the forms of study might be more general, in-

deed the first two years should be to the Ph.D. what the first half of college is to the B.A. The student would have a period of wide reading and assimilation, devoted to establishing a large literary context in which the final specialization would better take place. The last two years would be devoted to a dissertation and to a substantial amount of supervised teaching experience.

### Avoid Vocationalism

Second, extreme vocationalism should be avoided. Any plan that would get people ready to teach seems to have a heavy vocational bias. This is more apparent than real in the program under discussion. You become a good teacher by knowing something well yourself, by being well-trained in scholarship and learning through the example of good teachers of your own, and then by going and teaching yourself. You do not have to be given courses in all of the things you eventually will be called upon to teach, nor do you need a course in teaching per se.

But graduate students have been accused of demanding forms of study so concentrated and specialized that the candidate was taken too far away from the things he would spend his life trying to convey to others. This charge may be answered by a change in content and emphasis, especially in the first two years. These years would be given more to reading, writing and absorbing over a wider literary area than is now usually the case. The professional side would be stressed in the last two years, with carefully supervised teaching as part of the program.

### The Text

Third, all literary study begins with the text before you. This is by no means as obvious as it sounds, and nowadays serious literary study is much concerned with a return to this principle. You do not need to set up courses for especially prescribed ends to provide ways by which students will learn other things besides literature. What the work before you is and demands will govern your approach to it and will tell you what it is that you need to know outside in order to understand it.

Liberal teaching makes use of (Please Turn To Page 5)

## THE CEA CRITIC

Published at 38 Hampden Street  
Springfield, Massachusetts

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Published Monthly, September thru May  
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Association  
South College, University of Mas-  
sachusetts, Amherst, Mass.)

Annual Subscription, \$2.00

Re-entered as second-class matter Oct.  
2, 1954, at the post office, Springfield,  
Mass. under the Act of August 24, 1912.

Entire issue, copyright 1956 by the  
College English Association.

THE LINGUIST AS  
(Continued From Page 1)

at the same time say that I loved and respected her. This realization, and this course, brought about my change of attitude.

"When I remember that linguistic habits make language laws or acceptable innovations, I feel that it is possible (though not probable) for some forms peculiar to my mother's speech to enter into "standard English" — whatever that is. I am aware now that much of my mother's speech is conservative and should not necessarily be condemned. Certainly among our neighbors down in Florida her usage is very effective for communicating her ideas.

"Now that I understand that dialectal usage (necessarily consistent usage) is vital for effective communication of ideas within certain areas and among particular groups, I am more at ease when Mother speaks. I often think of the adjective "conservative" and my embarrassment vanishes."

## The Humanity of the Humanities

Now I know better. Language is social activity — (How often had I said this without really believing it!) — and we cannot touch the subject, even so remotely as in a study of prehistoric i-Umlaut, without touching somewhere human behavior; without dipping our fingers, no matter how reluctantly, in the sea of troubles.

I am still suspicious and unregenerate, let me hasten to add. Prejudice whispers to me that it is my proper business to teach the i-Umlaut, not how to be kind to one's mother. Echo answers that I had better look again, pretty keenly, at my business. The humanity of the Humanities awaits not our invitation like an extra guest on the yon side of the door. The very substance of our subject matter, even when that is at its most arcane, technical, de-juiced, piddling even, is humane not only in the scholastic but in the common sense. Linguistics may be a science, perhaps by now a technology, but it cannot, by its own nature, remove itself very far from the human being who parts his lips to make utterance. We cannot learn anything about it without discovering something of ourselves.

What strikes home most appallingly is the converse — that ignorance of the facts of language is pitiable at best, but at worst it can be serious.

Andrew Schiller  
Univ. of Illinois, Chicago

## Jibberings of an Old Ghost

Speaking of book lists (and I did speak of them in an article in this periodical during some previous incarnation (CEA Critic Nov. and Dec. 1953) it occurs to me that teachers are curiously shy of humor and nonsense — especially nonsense. In the books recommended for home reading during vacation time or in connection with literature courses one seldom finds Lear or W. S. Gilbert or Lewis Carroll or Thackeray's and Bret Harte's delightful parodies of famous writers of their day. The list might be made far longer and include the gay or fantastic writing of many giants in the world of literature.

Mark Twain is about the only one who is granted an accolade by the educational authorities. Perhaps that is because he wrote very little else; and, after all, Oxford gave him a degree!

Oddly enough, though Mark Twain's books find a place in the most dignified book lists, they are never his serious books. He himself thought more of his Joan Of Arc than almost anything else he had written; and, of course, he was intensely serious when he wrote his book on Christian Science. But, obviously, that could not be included.

It is my guess that some of Thackeray's humorous writings will be very much alive after some of his novels are thoroughly dead.

In the long ago I wrote an article pleading for more humor in required reading and suggested that any good college might perform the world of letters a great service by establishing a chair of Nonsense. Franklin Adams, in his newspaper column, took this up and suggested that if there were such a chair some humorous student would put a tack in it.

Many of our greatest literary authorities beginning with Dr. Samuel Johnson have given nonsense a high place in literature and John Ruskin in making a list of England's hundred best books, put Lear's Nonsense at the head of the list.

There is one great weakness in my proposal; and that is that we include so much nonsense in our book lists as they stand today, without classifying them as such, that perhaps we don't need any more. I have before me a copy of the American Journal of Psychology issued about sixty years ago and the opening article, which uses up a good many pages, is devoted to "The psychology of Tickling, Laughing and the Comic." Dr. G. Stanley Hall who, so they say, invented the "questionnaire", is responsible for this particular bit of

research. Evidently he found out from hundreds of individuals just how they laughed.

He discovers that a great percentage of them cannot help laughing if something happens which surprises them. They laugh when they see a cat in church; they laugh when they see a dignified looking man tumble down; they laugh when anyone does the right thing at the wrong moment; they laugh at funerals, because they cannot help themselves.

So Dr. Hall concludes that "laughing is one of the numerous epilepsies to which the human creature is susceptible."

I am afraid I am that sort of an epileptic. A great many things make me laugh which I shouldn't laugh at. Among them is this serious study of G. Stanley Hall. In it he tabulates various forms of laughter, noting the age and sex of each specimen. For instance, "male, 18. Lips first curl, then eyes shine, face changes and grows very handsome, then body sways, head is thrown back, mouth is wide open, rocks and emits ha-ha for several minutes, till he is fatigued and slowly sobers up with a deep sigh."

Page after page of these descriptions follow; now and then he summarizes as follows: "The vocal expressions of laughter are extremely diverse. The sound most generally emitted is described as he, he, passing over to ha, ha. But almost every kind of noise occurs. F-17 is said to "bray somewhat like a donkey". F-15 cackles, M-21 snorts. F-20 laughs with a noise like an emission of steam." As I read on I find myself laughing harder and harder and then wondering what kind of a noise I am making and whether or not I ought to see a psychologist.

I have another pamphlet in my possession by a psychologist in our nation's Department of Agriculture who has made a serious study of the different ways in which crickets, cicadas and katydids do their chirping. He finds that a New England katydid tells us about Katy with an accent which differs from that of the same variety of insect in Virginia. I suppose these are mannerisms they have picked up from their human neighbors, and the Virginia one says "Katsdyud"; I can't spell the way the Yankee insect would say it, but I know because I talk that way myself.

If I could bring these things together in a book I do not know just how I would classify it in a book-  
(Please Turn To Page 3)



## EXERCISES IN LITERARY UNDERSTANDING

The following exercise, on Mark Twain's *Old Times On The Mississippi*, is the fifth in a series prepared by John Butler of Amherst College. This exercise is designed to be given to students in an introductory course, after they have finished a first reading of the book. A student should be expected to spend from three to four hours in writing this paper.

"In truth, the passenger who could not read this book saw nothing but all manner of pretty pictures in it, painted by the sun and shaded by the clouds, whereas to the trained eye these were not pictures at all, but the grimmest and most dead-earnest of reading matter."

"Now when I had mastered the language of this water, . . . I had made a valuable acquisition. But I had lost something, too." — ch. 3

## I

In the above passage, Twain describes the trained eye and the untrained eye as "reading" the "same thing"—the river—differently. Read carefully the whole section on "reading the river" (the last four paragraphs of ch. 3); then find an example (in the last three paragraphs) of the "same thing" read differently.

1. How does the untrained eye read it? As what does it see this "thing"?
2. How does the trained eye read it? As what does it see this same thing?
3. How is the "something" which Twain says he has "lost" defined in this section? Exactly what is it that Twain says he has lost?
4. How is the "valuable acquisition" defined here? What has Twain acquired?
5. Of what, then, does the difference in the "readings" consist?

## II

Now return to chapter 7 and re-read the first ten paragraphs. In this section, Twain describes a scene—the beginning of a steamboat race—as both the trained and the untrained eye see it. Describe how he does this by:

6. citing, from four or five paragraphs, several words and phrases which "locate" the speaker as either the trained eye or the untrained eye, or which locate him as on the steamboat or on shore. Explain as fully as you can your reasons for saying that these words locate the speaker as you say they do;
7. citing one instance where the

list, but surely some important conclusions must be arrived at by the reading of it or why should our colleges and our government go to the expense of printing such stuff in the first place? If we could read enough of them we might draw important conclusions. Important to somebody, but I can't think who.

Burges Johnson

trained eye and the untrained eye see the "same thing" differently. What is the "same thing"? What is the difference between the two "readings"?

## III

Now, referring to both I and II above, draw a conclusion about what it is that Twain has "lost" and what he has "acquired" during his four years on the river. Offer and opinion, in the light of your answers to I and II, on what his four years experience has done for him. Obviously it has taught him how to perform certain actions, such as steering a boat and seeing better at night, but surely these were not the important acquisitions which were of use to him after he left the river. What else do you think the experience did for him?

## General Comment on the Exercise

Part of the value of this exercise is simply in requiring the students to examine very carefully—to re-examine—one of the best passages in the book, the "reading the river" section. The first two parts of the exercise should not be difficult for them; the third part, which is more difficult, is an invitation to say something worth saying.

Question III has to do with what Twain has "lost" and "acquired" during his four years on the river, and it might be suggested to the students that before they answer this question they ask themselves whether he has lost anything. And if so, has he lost what he thinks he has lost? The answer, I think, is that he has not lost his ability to see the race in the same terms that he saw it in when he was a boy, when he was a spectator: he still sees the excitement, and he can describe it in this way even now. He says he has lost the "romantic" way of looking at steamboating, that he no longer sees the river as "beautiful," but surely he disproves this statement in the section on the race. Here he is able to blend the romantic with the realistic, the two elements going together in such a way that both are intensified. For example, the "realistic" observation that it is skill which determines the winner of the race certainly enhances the glamour of the whole thing, as we see the pilots matching wits; and the "romantic" description of the noise and confusion and excitement surely makes the whole description

more "realistic," a fuller and "truer" impression of the scene. It appears to me that what Twain says he has lost he has not lost at all.

## Suggestions for Answers

1. The untrained eye reads "rings" on the water as "opals."
2. The trained eye reads "rings" as "dissolving bar."
3. He says he has lost a way of seeing things, a way he refers to in terms of "romance and beauty" (end of ch. 3).
4. He has acquired a new way of seeing things, and with it a good deal of high-order skill. The new way of seeing things involves more, however, than simple "physical" seeing: it includes the act of expressing. Also anything Twain "sees" in this new way implies, or can be translated into, a way of behaving, a set of actions. Thus, when he sees "lines and circles," he does not translate this into "opals" but rather into "stealing up"; but not merely into "stealing up," for he goes on to translate "stealing up" into "danger," and then he translates "danger" into a set of actions: "I must steer the boat in a certain way." It is only when he can translate what he sees on the river-surface into actions that he is a trained pilot and no longer the untrained eye.

Not many students will be able to carry the translation this far, but that does not mean the question is a bad one, it seems to me. It means that even the better students will be able to learn something from the class discussion of their papers when the papers are returned to them; and it also means that the best students do have a chance to say these things by themselves if they work hard enough at it.

5. The difference in readings, then consists in a difference in "physical" seeing, and a difference in expressing: the trained person is able to see more, and he is able to assign more complex meanings to what he sees. (To the untrained eye, "trampling rings" are not translatable into actions.)

Part II. I have numbered ten paragraphs, starting with the first paragraph of chapter seven, and I shall indicate where I think the speaker is in some of them.

Par. 1 Here he is the spectator, the untrained eye, either on shore or on the boat. "People came ashore" implies that he is on shore, though this is not much evidence. The point is that he is describing the excitement and confusion of the scene as a spectator would, not as

an "insider," the pilot, would.

Par. 3 Here he is the trained eye as he describes the difference between the appearance of the race (dangerous; sleepy pilots) and the reality (safe; alert pilots).

Par. 4 In the first part of this paragraph, he is on shore: "people (on shore) talked only of the coming race" for weeks ahead of time. In the second part he becomes more the trained eye, talking about "stripping" the steamers, sending the "spars" ashore, and so on.

Par. 5 He is on the steamer, and he is the trained eye. He is careful to dissociate himself from the untrained eyes, the "romantic" passengers who "always run to the side when there is anything to see," not knowing anything about "trimming boat."

Par. 8 Here he is the spectator on shore as he hears "two mighty choruses burst forth" and then "here they come!" Then he watches the "stately creatures"—this is the romantic spectator talking—"go whistling by like the wind."

7. An example of the "same thing" described differently is in par. three where he tells us explicitly the public sees the race as dangerous, but that to the insider it isn't that at all.

Part III. He has gained a way of "seeing," perhaps the most important point here for the student being that the fact of seeing involves an act of expressing, the two together being called "reading" by Twain. As I have indicated above, I do not think he has lost what he thinks he has lost. He can speak only one language at a time, of course, and I think he means that a language he didn't previously know at all has now become the language he automatically speaks first in certain situations. And it is only by an effort that he is able to make himself use the language that he used to use in these situations. The language that previously was habitual is now a "second" language, and what he has lost is the habit of using it. When I say above that Twain "means" to say all of these things, whereas it is obvious that he didn't mean to say them at all, I mean that this is how I make sense of Twain's feeling that he had "lost" something.

We might say then that this is a book about learning to talk in a new way. Four years of intensive experience in doing, in one small area, give Twain a vocabulary, a way of "reading," just as two years at Walden Pond gave Thoreau a way of talking about the world, a way of ordering experience, a way of making metaphors.

## LUGUBRIOUS LUCUBRATION: WHAT ABOUT SOPHOMORE VOCABULARY?

Neither "lugubrious" nor "lucubration" would I demand that a sophomore literature student must know or perish, but I am not pleased or reassured to find large numbers of him missing "dormant," "hilarious," "illusion" (apparently indistinguishable from "delusion"), "genial," and "frivolous."

It renders me lugubrious, distinctly. And since we are already known to our colleagues as a sour, sad lot of misanthropes (see Norbert Wiener on "English teachers' acidity"), perhaps we may as well admit it and try to explain how we got that way. The current atrabilious seizure afflicting the undersigned stems from a double set of vocabulary tests.

## Walden Too Hard?

Recently, as I was looking over a reading textbook used by one of my daughters in the sophomore year of high school, I noticed a glossary of unusual words recommended to the student for study. I read down the list a little way and became gradually aware that many of these words were the same as those I had lately extracted from Thoreau's *Walden* and included in a word-list for the use of University sophomores.

Finally, I roused myself to make a systematic comparison which revealed somewhat over eighty duplications. (Nothing from *Walden*, I should explain, was included in the 10th-grade text; however, *Walden* is excerpted in another book of the same series.)

Thoreau's vocabulary, in company with that of nearly any other author from the 19th century, is — as of the 1950's — more than a little bit troublesome to university students: this I had long since determined for myself.

This is true not because Thoreau & Co. use obsolescent or overpedantic or archaic words, although there are of course a few exotics to be found, but because the vocabulary of many, possibly most, university students today is simply not extensive enough to cope with an author of moderate difficulty.

If American college students cannot read with appreciation the literature of their own land, a substantial part of the reason is to be found in the fact that too many of them do not know what enough of the words mean.

## A Test List

To test this melancholy hypothesis a bit further, I reduced my list of duplicate words from *Walden* and the glossary of the 10th-grade reader to a final list of 63, which went into a preliminary vocabulary test given to two sections

of sophomore American literature.

Here are the words, in alphabetical order (on the test they appeared in four random lists with matching synonyms and several distractors in corresponding columns): alluvion, austere, avarice, carnage, carnivorous, carrion, cessation, chaos, combustion, complacent, conjure, debauched, delusion, derision, dissipate, dormant, ecstasy, effectual, enhance, epitaph, fabulous, fluctuation, foreboding, frivolous, genial, ghou, guile, guttural, habitat, hilarious, husbandry, illusion, incredulity, indigenous, indolence, innate, intangible, inviolate, irrecoverable, labyrinth, lavish, lethargy, levity, ludicrous, magnanimity, malefactor, myriad, precursor, propitious, rectitude, repugnance, respite, saccharine, sagacity, scullion, soliloquize, stupendous, surfeit, tafferel, transient, transverse, velocity, vitiate.

## 47%, Not 70%

A total of 93 students took the test. Scores, interpreted in terms of 100%, ranged all the way from 11 to 92; medians in the two sections were 51 and 43, with a composite median (all scores taken together) of 47. Twelve students out of 93 made 70 or better; all the others fell below. More than half knew less than half the words on the list.

Well, how many should they have known? A really good class, I think, ought to have scored a median somewhere near 70, which still leaves room for a number of lame ducks. Words like "propitious" and "tafferel" I did not expect to be identified correctly by very many students, but I do not regard the list as an uncommonly hard one.

The fact that the scores dipped so low indicates to me that (as I have observed in the past) many students will find *Walden* a dry, difficult, disagreeable book, whereas they will accept and enjoy *Huckleberry Finn* or *Main Travelled Roads*. Their readiness or lack of readiness to comprehend the author's vocabulary may very well determine their response to his work.

## Ripeness Is All

In one sense, of course, it is misleading to talk about being "ready" to read a masterpiece; the approach to any great book is an act of faith, and the reader will find himself learning much as he goes along. If we waited to be ideally "ready" we would never attempt anything worth reading.

Still, there is a point somewhere at which even a sincere and strenuous effort seems futile; if the reader must struggle continually

for meanings, he sooner or later wants to give up. Only the most intellectually resolute or the most sorely in need of a grade will persevere.

And so I continue to teach *Walden* in full knowledge of the fact that "the mass . . . (of student-readers of *Walden*) . . . lead lives of quiet desperation."

## Publicity Needed

I have no solution to the dilemma, but I do have one suggestion: pitiless publicity. Let's point out vocabulary deficiencies at every possible opportunity — not in such a way as to ridicule or shame or discourage the student, but to inform him gently but firmly that all is not well with his basic intellectual equipment.

Our chances of success or failure at teaching literature are so closely tied to the fact that our students either do or do not possess a vocabulary sufficient to cope with their reading, that we can hardly afford to ignore it.

Nor is all this intended as a criticism of high-school teaching, much as one might wish for better students in his college literature classes. There seems to be neither time nor manpower to do, in the high schools, fundamental linguistic work of the kind that so badly needs doing.

But we needn't fool ourselves or our students about the level of linguistic proficiency they have attained. Figures comparable with those reported here are to be obtained, I feel reasonably sure, in nearly any college in the country.

What can we do? Up to the limit of our capacity we ought to work harder, of course.

## Hold the Citadel!

Should we abandon the classics (including the American classics — Melville, Emerson and Whitman are no easier than Thoreau) simply because they are hard reading? To follow the doctrine sometimes preached, that reading matter must conform to the student's level of ability, would wipe out a large portion of everything specified today for college reading. (And what wouldn't it do to some of the textbooks in other fields!)

We must try to hold the citadel, in my opinion, but we should be thoroughly aware of the forces opposing us. Serious deficiency in vocabulary is one. We ought to probe into it not only on the freshman level but on the sophomore level and on the upper levels too.

We ought to make students aware that we are much concerned about so basic a matter, not just by a vocabulary test on the entrance examination but by other tests at numerous other times.

We are much concerned because their inability to handle the words they meet affects their performance in the immediate course work, but we are — or should be — even more concerned because their present inability to read and enjoy literature will be perpetuated. A few, possibly, may be brought to see the reason for their handicap; fewer than these will eventually overcome it. But all should be shown plainly the linguistic facts of life: that's the least we can do.

Joseph Jones, Univ. of Texas

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## THE PH.D. IN ENGLISH

(Continued From Page 1)

whatever is necessary to interpret a given work properly. It follows that you can find out through the work itself what the history or philosophy is that you need in order to understand it. Obviously this is not meant to minimize what is called background, but only to suggest that literature itself will be found rich and varied enough both to provide the foreground and to lead to fruitful exploration of the background. With the right attitude toward the work itself, courses can and should contain just the standard works of our literary tradition. No one has to think up courses in anything in particular.

### Implementation:

#### The First Two Years

Implementing these general principles demands a specific program which should at the beginning be based on the arts of reading and writing more than on the specialized forms of investigation and discovery, followed by an equally long period of training in professional teaching and research.

Dividing the student's time between courses that emphasize wide reading on the one hand, and writing on the other, the first two years of graduate study may proceed as follows:

A general two-semester course in the Ancient Classics, translated, one year; a general two-semester course in Tragedy and Comedy the next year. Experience has shown that the materials of such courses form the most solid foundation for later study and teaching. Courses in what is called "World Literature" in most programs of General Education contain many of these materials, so that the candidates would have anticipated a common future need. More important still, these materials are unsurpassed for historical, critical, and interpretive purposes. The aim here would be reading and discussing, leading to a long written examination at the end of each term; no papers would be required.

Two regular semester courses in English Literature (in a period, a man, or both) each leading to a substantial paper. This kind of work is so standard and common that it hardly needs further comment. The regular procedures of reading, discussing, and lecturing, or the giving of individual oral reports would be followed, and the big work of each term would be the paper. The program would try here to maintain all the values of traditional scholarship, applying the accepted methods and procedures. At the same time a large block of important reading would be done,

since reading is at all times the first activity.

Two other courses like the ones just preceding, but with the writing in the form of short critical and expository papers. Here the reading would continue as usual, but the chief training would be in clear, forceful, and accurate expression of ideas and interpretations. These courses would try to make use of the best current ideas and the procedures of modern criticism. Thus the plan would hope not to miss any real value from what is established in graduate study everywhere, while absorbing new approaches. If this method did not produce the twin ideal of the scholar-teacher, the fault would not lie in graduate school narrowness, as is so often charged.

### Language Requirement

Reading courses or supervised programs in another literature besides English. Finally the new program would try to give some logic to the language requirement. As the practise now is, a student has to show that he can read French and German; some of the older graduate schools require Latin as well. But too often nothing is done with these languages; a student passes examinations on them but is seldom required to make any further use of them.

We would say that instead of being merely able to read French, for example, the student should have a good knowledge of the literature of that language. Here we do not mean knowledge through translations as with Latin and Greek. Matthew Arnold is right that knowledge of another literature besides the one in which you are an

expert is a most desirable critical instrument so this requirement needs no defense outside of its own obvious value.

Yet the idea of another literature has been urged at professional meetings for years, with little result. Its benefit to a graduate student in English would be very great, and besides it would help to strengthen the language departments of the University. In any case, the requirement of another literature makes sense of the demand for languages in the graduate study of English, ending the present contradictions and anomalies. In practice, we would simply say that a student must read both French and German, and he must in addition have a good knowledge of the literature of one of them.

### Final Specialization

After the first two years, the candidate would take an examination over the field of English literature; his knowledge of the other literature would be tested by the language department in question. After thus showing that he was qualified to undertake a strictly professional program of work, he would be required to show, and be aided in developing, two things: an ability to teach, and a capacity for doing a large piece of independent work to be presented in a dissertation.

We would not have the teaching come before the third year, since we would not want the candidate's main task in graduate school to be interrupted: the getting of the best general literary education we can offer. But in each of his last two years, he would teach at least one

Freshman English class under direction. He would be doing his dissertation also, and so would emerge at the end of four years with his degree and good teaching experience. We would be offering a carefully selected and trained product, with weaker candidates screened out by examination and other special requirements before the end.

### A Matter of Emphasis

In adopting this plan at Rochester, we found that very little will have to be added to course numbers in the present catalogue. Work already being given can be adjusted and combined to meet the new requirements. It is a question of emphasis only, suggesting that once more the main problem in education seems to be one of doing what we profess to do already. Really to serve our piously expressed ideals of long standing will be revolution enough.

In conclusion, a word might be said as to how this plan fits in with probable developments in English graduate study now being widely discussed. At the 1951 meeting of the Modern Language Association, Professor Rice of the University of Michigan pointed out that future graduate students would have trouble finding places in the established colleges and universities. He felt that jobs would have to be found in the fast-developing community colleges, various branches of state institutions, and in junior colleges or other areas of publicly supported education.

The newer institutions take a more general educational line, and their literary study is modified accordingly away from the more extreme forms of specialization. Still they take the Ph.D. for granted too, while they demand a much greater all around usefulness from their teachers. Our notion of general reading in the classics, in the forms of Tragedy and Comedy, and in the other literature in its own tongue is designed to give new dimensions of usefulness and familiarity to our product and so to meet the wider requirements of the future.

But we do not have to defend these proposals on the ground that they anticipate a coming need for their special product. The program, even omitting the supervised teaching, is still a good Ph.D. discipline and would be entirely defensible for anyone who wants a Ph.D. in the conventional sense of the term. But we feel that its main contribution would come from having trained examples of our common ideal of the teacher-scholar.

Bernard N. Schilling  
University of Rochester

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## Interim Report of the CEA Committee on Ph.D. Curriculum and Preparation for Teaching

In submitting this interim report, I want to stress the fact that the committee was not constituted until last summer, and began its work just two months ago. There is still much to do before we have our final report ready. We are a large committee of twelve, at widely separated universities, which makes communication difficult. But the cooperation of the members has been gratifying. The letters by individual members presenting their views have shown both careful reflection and a lively concern with the problem. As chairman I wish to express my thanks to the entire committee, along with a hope that they will continue their efforts. I believe that the breadth of experience and knowledge represented by the committee outweighs any disadvantages of size, and that because of our numbers our final report will be more likely to be representative of the thinking of the entire CEA.

The first letter of the chairman to the committee, dated November 3, is printed in the December CEA Critic. It reviews the work of the earlier committee under the chairmanship of Prof. William L. Werner, gives a bibliography of articles in the Newsletter and Critic on Ph.D. programs, and presents a series of seventeen propositions, most of them taken from these articles, for comment pro and con. Finally, it asks the committee for suggestions as to procedure, or for further "propositions" for the consideration of the members. This letter was purposely non-commit-

tal; no attempt was made to prejudge the problem.

As responses came in they were circulated among the entire committee. The first four received have already been circulated; five more will be sent out shortly. On the basis of these letters, the chairman drew up a questionnaire which ten members either filled out or commented on in letters. The questionnaire did not aim at completeness; there are many questions that must be considered later. It simply formulated into brief questions some of the propositions of the chairman's first letter and the replies of committee members. I summarize the results.

1. Breadth of training. In the questionnaire, Proposition #1 (chairman's letter of Nov. 3) was expanded to include Creative, Pedagogical and "other". Which of these (and in what order of importance) should be recommended for breadth in a Ph.D. program in English? They were approved in this order of importance:

1. Aesthetic-critical. Of the 7 committee members who numbered their lists, 6 placed this first, and one placed it second. Thus, among those expressing an opinion, there is virtual unanimity on the importance of the aesthetic-critical approach to English studies.

2. Historical-biographical. Rated 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4 in importance.

3. Linguistic. Rated 2, 3, 4, 4, 4, 7 in importance.

4. Philosophical. Rated 2, 3, 5, 6 in importance.

"Bibliographical", "creative", and

"pedagogical" received about equal weight following the first 4. One committee member emphasized the need for inter-disciplinary studies, placing them 2nd in importance after the aesthetic-critical. Discussion of inter-disciplinary programs will certainly be necessary before our final report is prepared.

II. Concentration. 1. The question as to breadth of training leads to that of concentration. Here the results of the questionnaire show that the committee believes the candidate should show "some degree of expertness" in either 1 or 2 of the following: aesthetic-critical (6 votes), historical - biographical (6), linguistic (6), creative (4), philosophical (4), bibliographical (3). Some members stated that concentration should imply expertness in 1 or 2 selected from all except the "pedagogical".

2. As to whether concentration should imply expertness in a period, a genre, or a single writer, there were no preferences shown. In other words, the committee considers it fully as acceptable to be "expert" in lyric poetry or in drama as to be expert in the Romantic period. And from the answers to I and II (1) it would seem to follow that whether one's "concentration" is in a period, genre, or single writer, the committee considers the order of importance in approach to be aesthetic-critical, historical-biographical, linguistic, and philosophical. There is, however, a certain contradiction between 1 and 2 as understandings of what concentration involves, and this must be discussed by the committee.

III. Language studies. For English language studies, the questionnaire shows a majority in favor of the History of the English Language as the requirement, with two in favor of Old English and Beowulf. The conventional requirement of French, German, and Latin as "tools" met with little favor. In fact, some of the strongest objections were made to this requirement. Many believe that the candidate should have a choice of the "tool" he needs, depending on his own studies. The majority hold that the conventional requirement should be dropped and replaced by the study of "foreign language as culture" and that a fuller mastery of one language and literature is more valuable to the candidate than the "tool" requirement for research. This language could be Greek, Latin, or a quite different method of evaluating the candidate's knowledge of say, French language and literature, than is now used for testing "reading ability".

IV. The questionnaire presents 6 possibilities for types of Ph.D. theses. Four members found all 6 acceptable, while at the other extreme, one member could give unqualified approval only to "historical research" and "critical study". But the majority thought that historical research (6 votes), critical study (6), and imaginative writing (5) are the most acceptable. It should be noted, moreover, that research, criticism and imaginative writing were given a virtually equivalent status of acceptability by the committee members.

V. Many of the recommendations tabulated above concern what is

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really our chief problem — namely, the relation of the Ph.D. curriculum to the more effective preparation of teachers. Comments by committee members emphasize the need for breadth of knowledge as well as concentration, for criticism and evaluation in literary studies, for knowledge of at least one foreign language and literature that goes beyond the acquiring of a "tool for research". In other words, the whole mode of graduate studies is centrally relevant to the preparation for teaching.

Is there, however, some way of preparing the teacher more specifically for his profession? The questionnaire offers 6 possibilities. The results are interesting. No committee member recommended a course given by the Education Department, and many are convinced that "that way madness lies". As one member put it: "Good teaching is the unteachable compound of unteachable suppleness: grace of mind, energy, articulation, invention, and interest." Six members approved "Practice, with guidance, for credit," and several stressed their conviction that only through "internships", under the supervision of the English department, could graduate students begin to acquire the art that characterizes good teaching.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alvan S. Ryan, Chairman  
Dec. 19, 1955

#### The Committee:

Morse Allen, Trinity College;  
Ellsworth Barnard, Bowdoin College;  
John Ciardi, Rutgers University;  
Ernest Earnest, Temple University;  
F. Cudworth Flint, Dartmouth College;  
Norman Foerster,

### Report of the National - Regional Relations Committee

The work of this committee was started soon after the annual meeting of the officers and directors at Amherst in June. At that time the question of national-regional relations was gone into in sufficient detail to produce recommendations regarding the directions in which the committee could proceed and pointed out specific problems which needed to be solved. This groundwork, together with a most thoroughly detailed Working Paper drafted by Max Goldberg and sent to the committee members in August, forms the basis for this study.

It is worthy of note that since this study was undertaken national-regional relations have been evolving and improving along the lines that this committee appears to recommend. For this growth and development both regional officers and committeemen, as well as national directors and officers are deserving of high commendation. To particularize, mention might be made of the following:

- a. The care with which a roster of regional officers and advisers has been built up by the national.
- b. The zeal and speed with which both regional officers and the

Critic staff have secured regionally originated material for the Critic.

c. The listing of the names of regional officers as part of the Critic masthead.

d. The planning and setting up of a breakfast meeting for regional CEA leaders in Chicago. (These leaders are guests of CEA, and in some cases of real need and in return for needed staff services in Chicago, national has assisted regionals through travel reimbursement.)

e. The planning for a meeting of regional representatives at the 1956 June meeting in Amherst.

f. The improvement of methods of securing widely representative regional leadership opinion on issues of concern to national CEA — matters not only of organization and development, but broad issues confronting us as English teachers.

g. The providing of suggestions as to speakers and topics for regionals, when these have been requested.

The answers to the following ten questions make up the most valuable part of this report. They represent regional leadership opinion and provide, it is hoped, a basis on which to formulate national practice and policy.

1. What jurisdiction should National CEA have over regional groups?

Advisory and auxiliary only. National should coordinate, encourage, and report on regionals. Also, national needs liaison with regionals (a) to see that policies are carried out, and (2) veto power out of self-protection in case a regional perpetrates an absurdity in the name of CEA.

2. What representation should regionals have in national officers and directors?

Apportioned, representing all parts of the country. It is of major importance to some regionals to be so represented — particularly newly formed ones. "There is need for a continuing National-Regional Relations Committee of about five members whose chairman should be on the national board of directors."

3. Should membership in regional be limited to those belonging to national?

Yes and no.

Should regionals have uniform membership fees?

No, but perhaps in the long run.

4. Should regional meetings be restricted to members only?

No, no, absolutely not!

5. Should regionals pay a set annual fee to national?

Yes and no. Yes, if moderate and for guaranteed, stated service. Yes, if regional fees can be established.

6. What services should regional units expect of national? If they pay a fee? If not?

This is the real crux of the matter. Certainly, regionals expect an interchange of ideas, programs, speakers, and a lively Critic which publishes the solid achievements of the regionals. For a fee they could expect visitations from national officers, direct and real help, support, and advice in setting up meetings and programs; promotion of the Institute idea where it is slow, stepping up of local regional standards where necessary; provide CEA membership directories; provide a red-hot placement service.

(Please Turn To Page 8)

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(Continued From Page 7)

7. What obligations should regionals adopt with regard to the national?

Promote membership in and objectives of the national; pay dues; send a representative to the annual meeting; loyalty to policies of the national; communicate all transactions of value to other regionals.

8. What exactly constitutes a "regional" unit?

A manageable geographic area convenient for frequent meeting; any logical unit interested in promoting national policies; the national-regional committee should study the "regions" and determine "centers" - these may be cities, states, or areas.

9. Should national help organize new regionals?

A mighty YES. "It's hard to organize from within - especially if the bordering regionals don't help." "We need help from the national desperately".

10. Should national-regional relations be left as they are?

They are evolving, but they need strengthening. Present relations need clarifying. The question merits careful discussion at Chicago.

Apart from the specific information in the answers above, the committee wishes to make the following observations and recommendations:

(a) The vigorous program of fall meetings of regional CEA, how a liveliness and growth worthy of commendation. Further development and encouragement can come through more improved national-regional relations.

(b) The recognition of an Ohio regional affiliate, after seven years of developmental work.

(c) The presence for the first time at the Va.-N.C. W.Va. regional of representatives from the Negro colleges. Lional Stevenson, former national CEA vice-president, commended the group highly for this feature of their meeting.

(d) The relationship of the CEA Institute interests and regional CEA affiliate work is often very close. National overseeing of this relationship is important.

(e) It seems highly desirable to have some sort of clear, simple relationship between the regionals and the national toward the development of mutual responsibility. This might easily take the form of a financial nexus. National resources are invariably plowed back, to a certain extent, to the regionals. The national membership figures would show a full strength. For your consideration perhaps a system could be worked out whereby dues could be paid to the national-

## Spring Meetings

NE CEA - April 28, Univ. of Connecticut. Morning speaker, Alfred Kazin; tentative afternoon speakers, J. B. Cunningham (Brandies); Marion Starkey (U. of Conn.); Charles Prouty (Yale); G. Armour Craig (Amherst); Louis Cox (Bowdoin); Charles Fenton (Yale). Also on the program: Robert Ornstein (U. of Conn.); George Hemphill (U. of Conn.). Program Chairman: Charles A. Owen, Jr.

Texas CEA - Breakfast session at 7:30 a.m. March 17 in the Queen Anne Room of the Student Union Building, Univ. of Texas, Austin. Plans are being made for a brief, interesting program which will stimulate lively "shop talk."

Indiana CEA - May 11, 12 at Taylor Univ., Upland, Indiana. Paul A. Cundiff of Butler University is program committee chairman.

Greater New York CEA - The annual cooperative spring meeting

say \$3.50, of which \$1.00 would be returned to the regional - thus giving the member some sort of joint membership. On the strength of answers to No. 6, perhaps a form of regional assessment can be worked out.

Franklin Norvish, Chairman, National-Regional Relations Committee: John Ball; A. K. Davis; John Q. Hays; Sarah Herndon; Patrick J. Hogan; Willis C. Jackman; Allen Kellogg; Carl Lefevre; Mitchell Marcus; Francis Mason; Ralph N. Miller; George L. Nesbitt; Clair C. Olson; Merrill Patterson; Harold F. Ryan.

with three other groups of English teachers has been waived in favor of the national meeting of the CCCC, March 22, 23, 24, at the Statler. First General Session of the CCCC is at 1:30 p.m. March 22; there will be four workshop sessions, with 19 groups in each session, three panel groups, and two general sessions. All English teachers are invited to attend. Francis Shoemaker (Columbia) is program chairman and Donald Sears (Upsala) represented CEA on the committee on program.

New York CEA - April 28, Univ. of Rochester. The meeting will be devoted to Shakespeare, and papers will be "Shakespeare and General Education" by R. J. Kaufmann (Rochester); "Shakespeare and the English Major" by W. R. Keast (Cornell); "Special Problems in The Merchant of Venice" by Moody Prior (Northwestern).

Middle Atlantic CEA - April 21, U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis. Subject of the meeting: The freshman problem.

Ohio CEA - April 20, Columbus, Ohio.

Pennsylvania CEA - April 28, Ursinus College.

Michigan CEA - May 5, Nazareth College.

W. W. Norton and Co., in announcing *The American Tradition in Literature* by Bradley, Beatty and Long, has made extensive use of comparative information on American Literature texts compiled by Ben W. Fuson of Parks College and distributed by CEA.

Ernest Leisy, former national president of CEA, has been elected an associate editor of *American Literature*.

John Ball and Cecil Williams have requested permission to quote from William H. Whyte's Corning CEA Institute address "The New Illiterates" in their book *Report Writing* (Ronald, 1955). In a forthcoming text *College Writing* they also reprint Dean Charles Odegard's "Liberal Education and the Quest for Quality," delivered at the CEA Schenectady Institute. This book will be published by Ronald Press this year.

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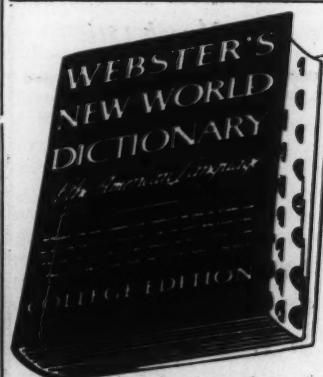
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